

CITY OF NEWTON

IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN

TRAFFIC COUNCIL REPORT

THURSDAY, JANUARY 24, 2008

Present: David Koses (Chair), Ald. Danberg, Clint Schuckel (Traffic Engineer), Sgt. Jim Norcross (Traffic Division, Police Dept.) Rosalie Myers (Clerk)

Also Present: Ald. Harney, Ald. Sangiolo, Ald. Lennon, Ald. Gentile, Candace Havens

#TC17-08 ALD. HARNEY AND SANGIOLO requesting study of intersections
(299-07) Commonwealth Avenue, Oakland Avenue, Auburn Street, and Evergreen
 Avenue to calm traffic, allow for pedestrian crossing and safe traffic
 merging.
 (Ward 4) [09-20-07 @ 3:53 PM]

ACTION: **HELD 4-0 UNTIL 2/28 MEETING, OR AS SOON AS DESIGN
PLANS ARE AVAILABLE.**

NOTE: Ald. Sangiolo began the discussion by explaining to the Council that there have been a number of issues in this area. The Board of Aldermen recently approved a Special Permit, which will permit a change from a Mobil gas station to a Hess gas station with a mini-mart at the corner of Auburn Street & Commonwealth Avenue. Neighborhood residents are concerned that this change may draw additional patrons to the site and would increase the opportunity for pedestrian and vehicular conflicts. To help mitigate potential conflicts, the Special Permit included a requirement that a speed table or equivalent be constructed at the intersection of Auburn and Evergreen to calm traffic and provide for a safer pedestrian crossing. The Special Permit also requires a reshaping of the curbline to slow traffic at the intersection of Commonwealth & Auburn as well as a pedestrian crosswalk to allow residents from Oakland Street to cross Auburn Street more easily and safely.

Traffic Engineer Schuckel presented slides of the area. He explained that the Special Permit conditions for Hess included the following:

A means to discourage left-turns out the Auburn Street site driveway nearest Commonwealth Avenue.

Raised crosswalk, or comparable means of slowing traffic and providing safe pedestrian access across Auburn Street at Evergreen Avenue.

A crosswalk across Auburn Street at Commonwealth Avenue with pedestrian signals

A curb extension along Commonwealth Avenue between Oakland Avenue and Auburn Street (City to Install)

Note: Public Works and the Board of Aldermen may determine that alternative traffic calming and/or pedestrian safety measures may be more effective and/or appropriate.

Traffic Counts and accident history were examined by the Engineering Division and Mr. Schuckel's conclusions were as follows:

The curb extension, sidewalk, signal improvements, and striped crosswalk at the intersection of Commonwealth Avenue and Auburn Street are recommended as proposed.

The installation of a raised crosswalk is not recommended at the intersection of Auburn Street and Evergreen Avenue due in part to the low volume of pedestrian crossings, incomplete analysis of accidents at Commonwealth & Auburn since 2002, and opposition by the Fire Department. The petitioner should submit to the Traffic Council, a plan for the curb extension and any other proposed improvements in the public right-of-way to Traffic Council for review and prior to forwarding to the Board of Aldermen for final action.

Deborah Gelch of 20 Oakland Avenue addressed her concerns. She said that one thing that made this project appealing would be the raised crosswalk and was dismayed that this significant element would be taken away.

Kevin Newman of 36 Oakland Avenue was also very positive about the installation of a raised crosswalk.

Stephen Buchbinder, attorney for Hess, said that money has been set aside for a raised crosswalk but if it is decided not to be used for that, they would be happy to use those funds for a comparable project.

Ald. Gentile emphasized that he felt the raised crosswalk was very important.

David Koses, Transportation Planner, said that the point of least consensus seems to be the raised crosswalk.

Ald. Danberg questioned what the opinion of the Fire Department was toward construction of a raised crosswalk at the location of Auburn & Evergreen.

Mr. Schuckel said that while the Fire Department said it was not a primary response route, the Fire Department is opposed to a raised crosswalk in this location, and generally, are opposed to vertical deflections in the road.

Mr. Koses agreed that a raised crosswalk would not be the best solution for this location, and would like to see something else considered. Mr. Koses discussed the Traffic Calming criteria which includes factors such as the volume of traffic, speed (information obtained from Police Dept.), Fire Department input, School Department factors, and the number of pedestrians crossing. Mr. Koses suggested the possibility of a pedestrian actuated signal at the location of Auburn Street & Evergreen.

Ald. Gentile said that it was suggested that the raised crosswalk would reduce speed and felt that any alternative would need to be something that would reduce speed.

Mr. Schuckel asked if the City or Hess would be responsible for the design. Mr. Buchbinder said Hess would be willing to do the design. Mr. Schuckel asked if Hess would submit two designs – one which includes a raised crosswalk, and a second which includes a different type of traffic calming/pedestrian crossing element, such as a pedestrian actuated signal and/or a bump-out.

Mr. Schuckel felt the item should be held for a future date so that plans could be made with both neighborhood and political support to work on this problem.

Candace Havens noted that other options such as narrowing of the road or reconfiguration of the intersection at Evergreen could also have a calming benefit. If the Traffic Council does not favor a raised crosswalk, she urged that it recommend an alternative means of slowing traffic and providing safe pedestrian across Auburn Street at Evergreen to address neighborhood concerns and comply with the intent of the Board Order

Alderman Danberg suggested looking into parking on Evergreen Avenue further. Sgt. Norcross was concerned that the raised crosswalk at this location would be the safest place to cross. The Traffic Engineer suggested that the item be HELD to allow for the Public Works and the Planning Department to work with Hess to present an actual design of a raised crosswalk for this location as well as an alternative proposal to be reviewed by the Traffic Council.

The Council agreed to hold the item 4-0.

#TC16-08 ALD. HARNEY AND SANGIOLO requesting modification to traffic
(298-07) signal @ Commonwealth Avenue/Ash Street to improve egress from
Islington Road on to Commonwealth Avenue. (Ward 4) [09-20-07 @3:53
PM]

ACTION: **APPROVED (RECOMMEND CHANGE TO PRE-TIMED SIGNAL
7 TO 9 AM AND 4-6 PM.WEEKDAYS) 4-0**

NOTE: Ald. Sangiolo had heard many complaints about residents having trouble exiting turning onto Commonwealth Avenue from Islington Road.

Mr. Schuckel said that Islington Road only has one way in or out. It is located about 500 ft. from a traffic signal. Mr. Schuckel presented his findings, which indicated minimal wait times during the time period examined (7:40 AM – 8:40 AM). Residents indicated that the more serious delays occur during weekday afternoons. Mr. Schuckel indicated that the existing traffic signal at Ash & Commonwealth cannot be relocated due to its age, and that the signal is “tripped” and turns green on Ash Street (red on Comm. Ave.) when a car is waiting to turn from Ash Street onto Commonwealth Avenue. The only cost-effective means of modifying the signal at Ash Street, which would, in turn, create additional opportunity to turn for Islington motorists to turn onto Comm. Ave., is to modify the Ash Street signal so to operate as a pre-timed signal during peak weekday hours. Other members of Traffic Council agreed.

#TC14-08 ALD. HARNEY on behalf of local residents, requesting that due to
(296-07) increased parking, a study of possible parking restrictions on Beacon
Street in Waban between Washington Street and Dorset Road. (Ward 5)
[09-18-07 @ 7:44 PM]

ACTION: **APPROVED 2-HOUR LIMIT, NORTH SIDE, 7-7 KENNY PLACE
TO DORSET ROAD, NO PARKING ANYTIME, SOUTH SIDE,
1994 BEACON STREET TO CORNER OF VARICK ROAD 3-1
(Norcross opposed)**

NOTE: Mr. Schuckel recommended removing some conflicting ordinances in
some areas, posting 2-hour parking and take no further restrictions.

A number of residents of the area spoke and expressed their concern over parking.

Mr. Koses read 2 letters into the record that felt that restricting parking would be a hardship (see attached). David Koses said that Beacon Street is a public street and there should be some opportunity for parking as long as emergency vehicles can get through.

There was a motion to approve a 2-hour limit; north side from 7 to 7 – Kenny Place to Dorset Road, no parking anytime, south side from 1994 Beacon Street to corner of Varick Road and replace missing signs. The Committee vote 3-1 (Norcross opposed)

#TC9-08 ALD. LENNON requesting on behalf of various business owners a
(154-07) discussion regarding the distribution of 1-, 3- and 12-hour meters in the
Richardson Street Municipal Parking Lot. (Ward 1) [4-23-07 @ 9:54 PM]
HELD 4-0 FOR 60-DAY TRIAL ON 10/18/07

ACTION: **APPROVED AND CONVERT 8 ADDITIONAL SPACES TO 12-
HOUR SPACES 4-0**

NOTE: Mr. Schuckel presented his conclusions from the trial, which indicated that
short-term parking meters in the Richardson Street lot continue to be underutilized. In

discussion with local business owners, the trial was a success, and employees are now able to park in short term meters, and subsequently move their cars into one of the long-term meters which are available after 9:00 AM (no parking 7AM-9AM). The owner of Gleason's Flowers confirmed that the changes have been working and also would be in favor of adding more 12-hour meters. Mr. Schuckel and Mr. Koses agreed that the changes have been positive and that some additional short-term meters could be converted to become 12-hour meters.

The Committee voted 4-0 to approve the trial and to convert 8 additional spaces to 12-hour spaces.

ITEM REFERRED TO TRAFFIC COUNCIL BY PS&T COMMITTEE ON 10/3/07:

#TC4-08 ALD. LENNON, on behalf of Charles and Shirley Daly, 2-4 Colonial
(176-06) Avenue, requesting an analysis and discussion of potential safety
 enhancements at the intersection of CALIFORNIA STREET AND
 COLONIAL AVENUE, Newtonville (Ward 1).

ACTION: **APPROVED (RECOMMEND APPLICATION OF**
 THERMOPLASTIC EDGELINES, SUBJECT TO AVAILABLE
 FUNDING, FROM BRIDGE STREET TO ADAMS STREET, BOTH
 SIDES 3-1 (Koses opposed)

NOTE: Mr. Schuckel said that during his observations, cars parked on either side of Colonial Street and no cars were parked on California Street near the intersection of California Street. There are no parking restrictions on Colonial Street. The Street width, 24 feet, is typical for a local street. There have been three crashes at the intersection since 2002.

Ald. Lennon said that cars have taken out the porch as well as trees at the property of Charles and Shirley Daly.

Ald. Lennon had, in the past discussed the possibility of extending the sidewalk into the road in order to keep the traffic away from their property.

Mr. Schuckel suggested installing a thermoplastic line on California Street near the Colonial Street intersection, subject to available funding. This would clarify the travel lanes. With limited City resources, the Traffic Engineer did not feel a justification for a major reconstruction of this intersection.

The Committee voted to approve 3-1 (Koses opposed) to approve application of thermoplastic lines, subject to available funding, from Bridge Street to Adams Street on both sides of California Street.

ITEM REFERRED TO TRAFFIC COUNCIL BY PS&T COMMITTEE ON 10/3/07

#TC1-08 **ALD. LENNON** on behalf of residents of BRIDGE STREET, Nonantum,

(381-04) requesting discussion and analysis of possible implementation of traffic calming measures on BRIDGE STREET (from California Street to Watertown Street).

ACTION: **NO ACTION NECESSARY 4-0**

NOTE: Mr. Schuckel noted that there is a crosswalk painted on Bridge Street at Linwood Avenue. Field observations showed that sightlines are clear in both directions, and that cars did stop for pedestrians most of the time at this crosswalk. His recommendation was to install pedestrian crossing signs at the crosswalk location.

Mr. Schuckel noted the relatively high number of employees and visitors of Chapel Bridge walking across Bridge Street & Linwood Avenue to and from the parking lot on the other side of Bridge Street. Residents of Bridge Street were present who noted that cars often speed on Bridge Street. Residents also expressed concern that additional traffic will be generated by a large apartment complex currently under construction in Watertown, which would bring additional traffic to Bridge Street. Traffic Council discussed the possibility of adding a stop sign or a raised crosswalk at the intersection of Bridge Street & Linwood. Mr. Schuckel noted that raised crosswalks should be located mid-block, not at a corner, and that stop signs should not be used as a traffic calming measure. With little evidence of a significant public safety problem at this location at this time, the Committee voted No Action Necessary.

The Council adjourned at approximately 11:10 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
David Koses, Chair

Traffic Council

Thursday, January 24, 2008

Agenda

- 1. Request to study intersections: Comm. Ave, Oakland, Auburn, Evergreen to calm traffic and allow for pedestrian crossing
 - # 299-07(TC17-08)
- 2. Request to improve egress from Islington Rd to Comm. Ave by modifying the traffic signal at Comm. Ave/ Ash St.
 - # 298-07(TC16-08)
- 3. Requesting parking restrictions on Beacon St bet. Washington and Dorset Rd
 - # 296-07(TC14-08)
- 4. Discussion regarding the distribution of 1-,3- and 12 hour meters in Richardson parking lot
 - # 154-07(TC9-08)
- 5. Requesting discussion and analysis of safety enhancements at California St/Colonial Ave.
 - # 176-07(TC4-08)
- 6. Requesting discussion and analysis of traffic calming measures on Bridge Street
 - # 381-07(TC1-08)

1. Comm. Ave, Oakland Ave.,
Auburn St., and Evergreen Ave.

Docket # TC17-08 (299-07)

Request to study intersection to calm
traffic and allow pedestrian crossing and
safe traffic merging

Evergreen Ave

Site of proposed
raised crosswalk

2hr 8-6 50'



Auburn St facing East



Auburn St/ Evergreen Ave



Auburn St near gas station



Comm. Ave near Rt.128



Site of proposed
curb extension

Comm. Ave near gas station

Site of proposed
curb extension



Oakland Ave.



Special Permit Condition 9A

Hess shall design & seek approval for:

- 1. A means to discourage left-turns out Auburn St site driveway nearest Comm Ave**
 - 2. Raised crosswalk, or comparable, across Auburn St at Evergreen Ave**
 - 3. A crosswalk across Auburn St at Comm Ave with pedestrian signals**
 - 4. A curb extension along Comm Ave between Oakland Ave and Auburn St (CITY TO INSTALL)**
- Public Works and the Board of Aldermen may determine that alternative traffic calming and/or pedestrian safety measures may be more effective and/or appropriate.**





Traffic Counts and Accident history

- **Pedestrian crossing at Auburn St/Evergreen = 0**
on Wed. 1/16/08 7:45-8:45AM
- **Traffic volume count:**
EB = 3,000 veh/day WB= 2,500 veh/day
- **Traffic speed count:**
EB 85 percentile = 37 MPH
WB 85 percentile = 35 MPH
- **Accidents since year 2002**
Oakland Ave = 0
Evergreen Ave = 0
Auburn St (entire roadway) = 98 (location data poor)
Comm. Ave (City line-Auburn) no information

Conclusions

- The curb extension, sidewalk, signal improvements, and striped crosswalk at the intersection of Comm Ave and Auburn St are recommended
- The installation of a raised crosswalk is not recommended at the intersection of Auburn St and Evergreen Ave
- Hess should submit a plan for the curb extension to Traffic Council for review and upon approval be forwarded to the Board of Aldermen (PF)

2. Islington Road egress improvements

Docket # TC16-08 (298-07)

Requesting modification of the signal at
Comm. Ave/ Ash St to improve egress
from Islington Road

Comm. Ave/ Ash St



Islington Road



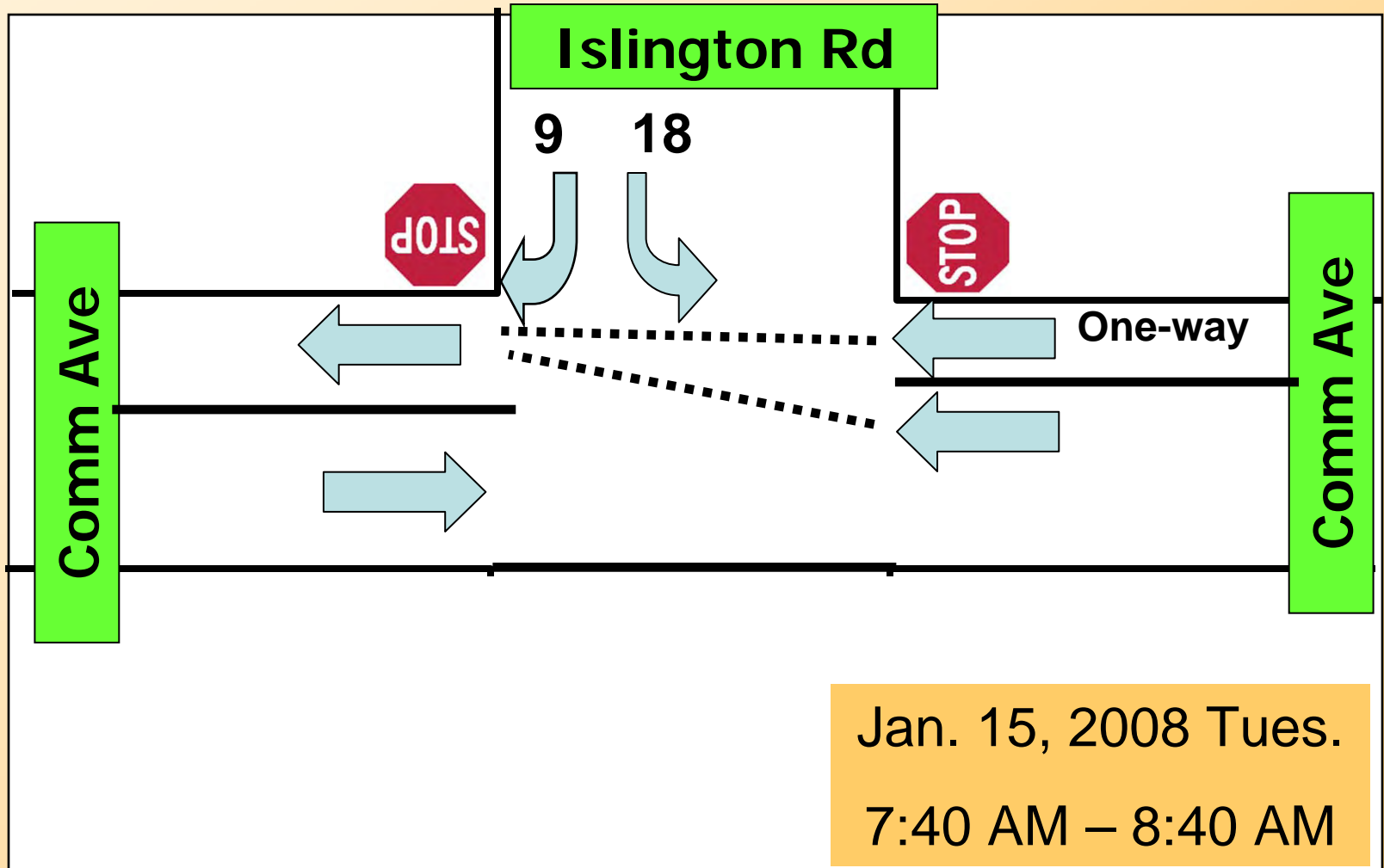
Comm. Ave facing West



Comm. Ave facing East



Islington Rd/ Comm. Ave



Conclusions

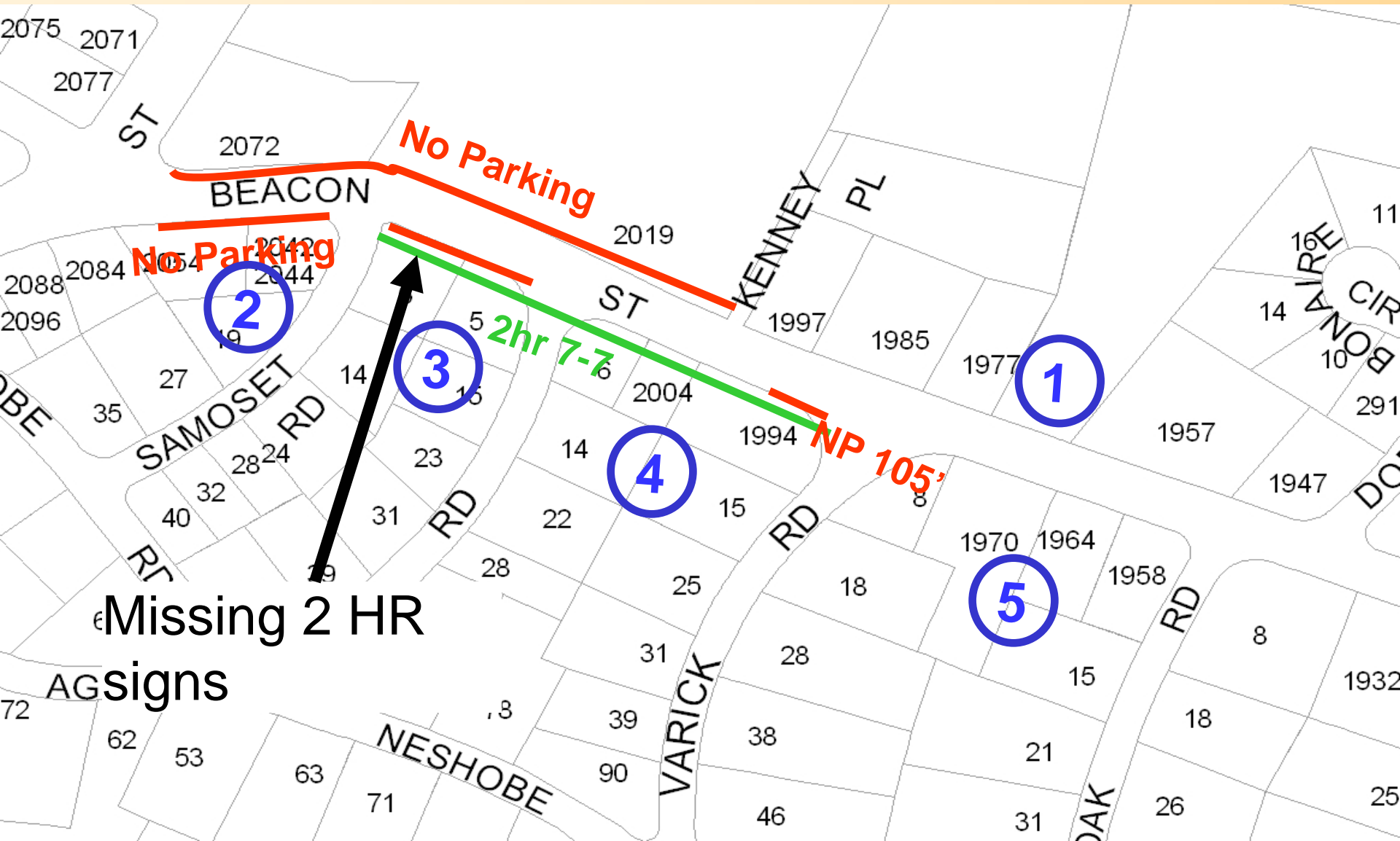
- Traffic exiting Islington:
 - Right turn traffic (9) proceeds with minimal delay
 - Left turn traffic (18) delays observed
 - 10 waited less than 30 seconds
 - 6 waited 30-45 seconds
 - 3 waited 45-60 seconds
- No cost-effective means to modify signal at Comm. Ave/ Ash St to reduce delays on Islington Rd
- The eastbound queues on Comm. Ave were not long enough to impact the traffic on Islington Rd
- There were no traffic accidents recorded at the intersection of Islington/ Comm. Ave since 2002
- No Action Necessary

3. Beacon Street between Washington St to Dorset Rd

Docket # TC14-08 (296-07)

Requesting parking restrictions on
Beacon Street

Beacon Street



Beacon St. EB near Agawam Rd



Beacon Street EB



Beacon Street



Beacon St near Washington St



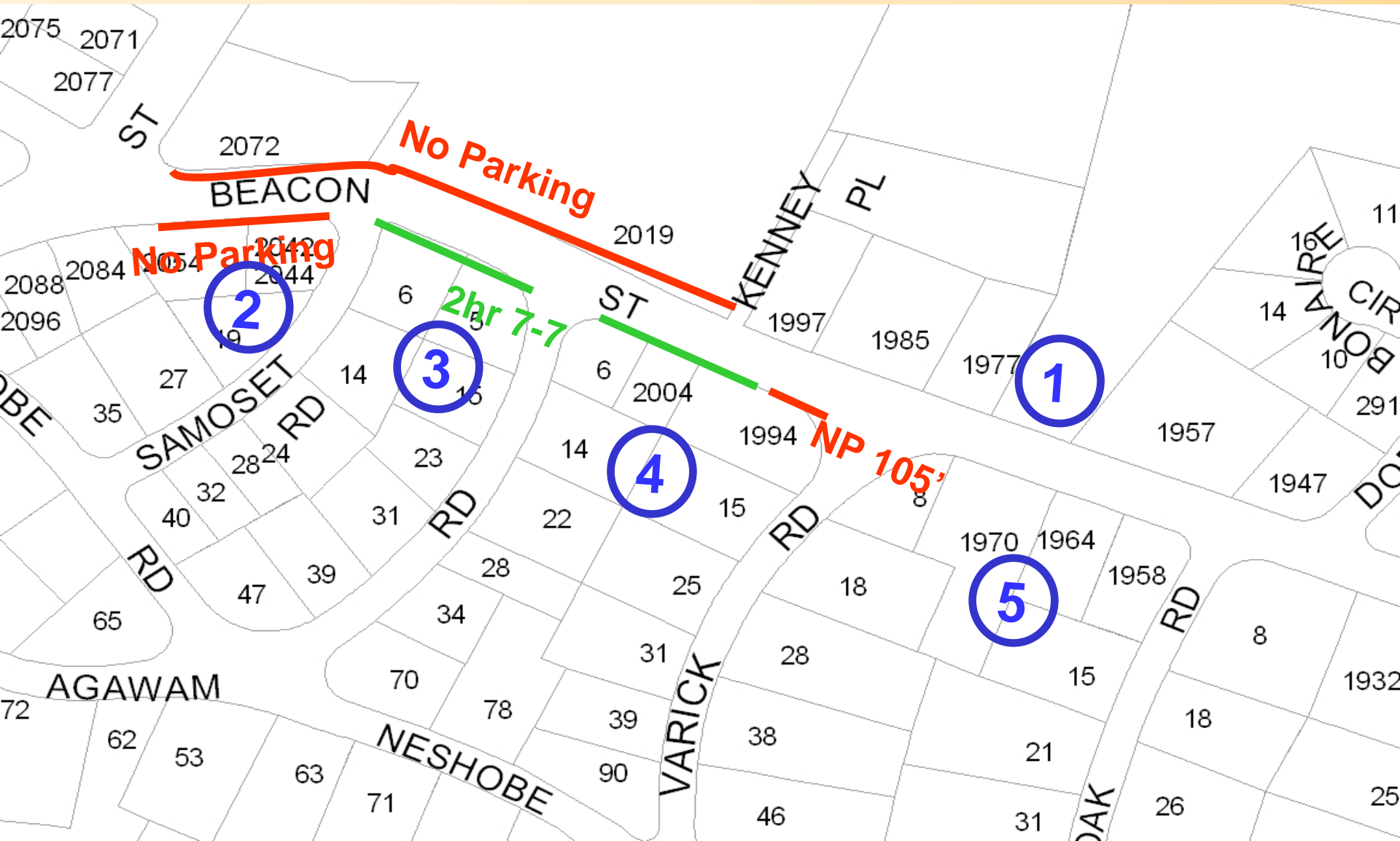
Beacon Street Parking counts

		1/9/08 11AM	1/16/08 8AM	1/17/08 9:30 AM	1/18/08 12:30PM	1/22/08 7:30AM
North Side bet. Kenny to Dorset	Area 1	8	0	2	5	0
South Side bet. Wash to Samoset	Area 2 (NP)	0	0	0	0	0
South Side Samoset - Agawam	Area 3 (2HR)	4	2	4	4	1
South Side Agawam - Varick	Area 4 (2HR)	0	0	3	4	1
South Side Varick - Oak	Area 5	0	0	0	0	0

Conclusions

- Cars parked on both sides of Beacon St. mostly between the morning and evening peak hours
- There are two conflict restrictions in area 3 (2hr parking and No parking).
- Currently the parking signs are missing in area 3
- Area 5 has no parking restrictions and few cars parked there
- Sight line is good at Varick Rd since there NPHC sign posted at the southeast corner
- Recommend to remove the conflicting ordinance in area 3, post as 2 hour parking, and take no further action

Beacon Street (proposed)



4. Richardson Parking lot

Docket # 154-07

Discussion regarding the distribution of
1-,3- and 12 hour meters in Richardson
parking lot

Richardson St and Parking lot (pre-trial)

Summary

12Hr meters

3Hr meters

1Hr meters



Richardson Street Lot (pre-trial)



Summary

12Hr meters = 12

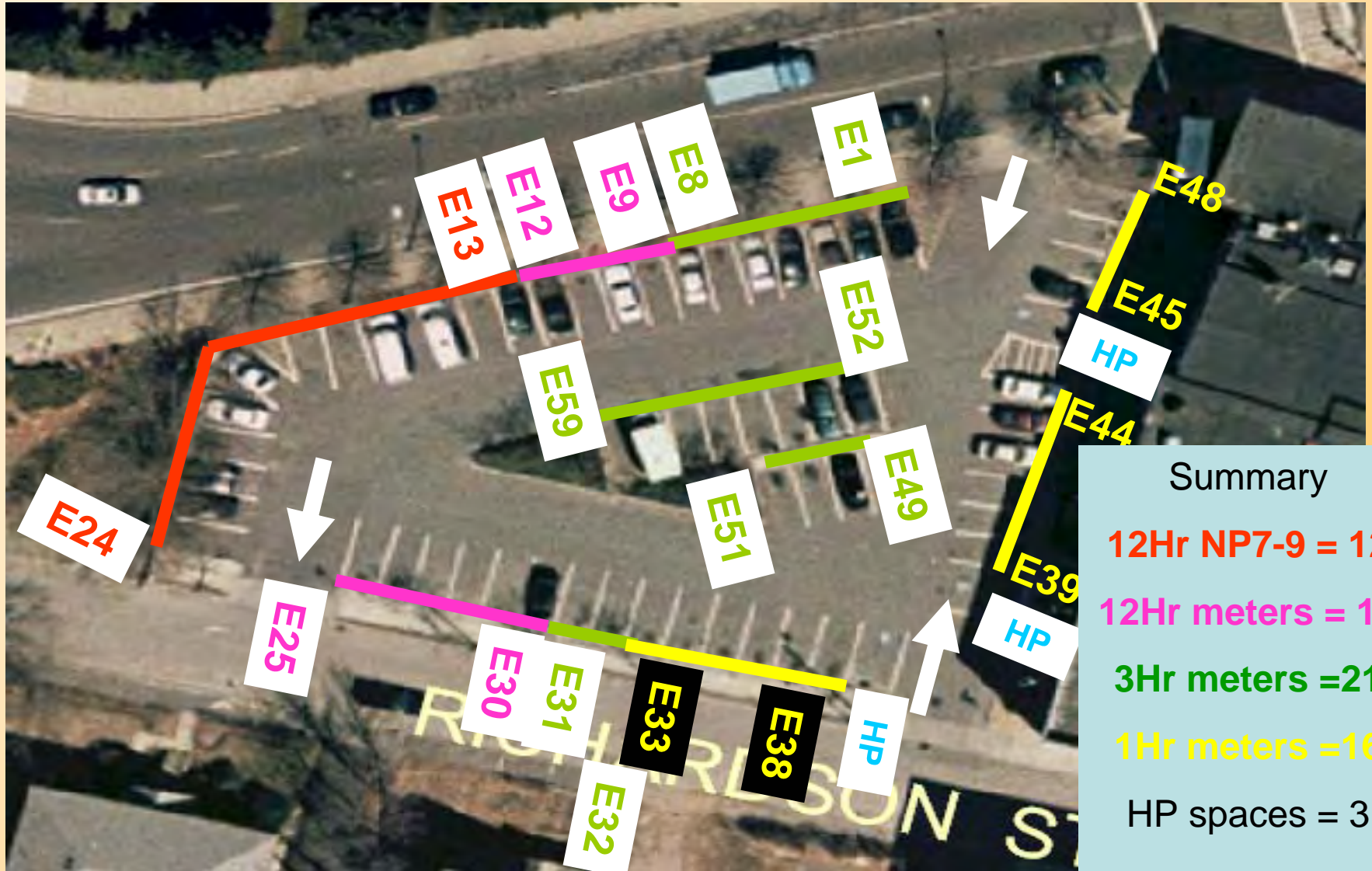
3Hr meters = 29

1Hr meters = 18

HP spaces = 3

Total = 62

Richardson Street Lot (proposed)



Summary

12Hr NP7-9 = 12

12Hr meters = 10

3Hr meters = 21

1Hr meters = 16

HP spaces = 3

Richardson St and Parking lot parking survey

Total # meters	12 hours (12)	3 hours (29)	1 hour (18)	On-St 12 hrs (7)
Mon. 10/4/07 1:30PM	12	15	4	6
Fri. 10/5/07 10:00AM	12	15	6	7
Tues.10/9/07 9:30AM	12	10	2	7
Tues.10/9/07 1:00PM	12	13	4	6
Wed.10/10/07 12:00PM	12	12	8	4
Mon.10/15/07 11:00AM	12	12	6	5
Wed.10/17/07 9:00AM	12	8	5	6

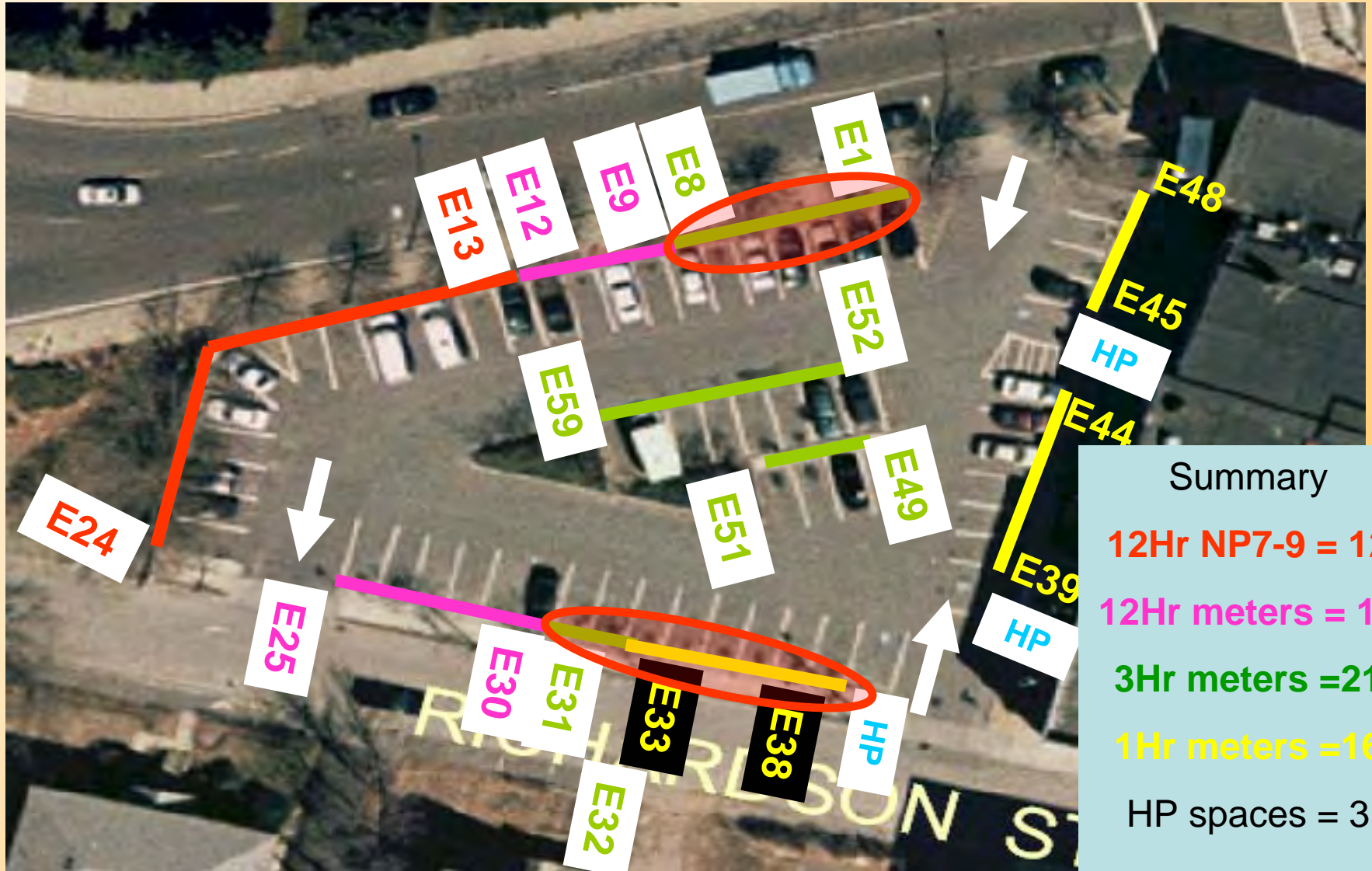
Parking lot parking survey during the trial

Total # meters	12 hours (10)	3 hours (21)	1 hour (16)	12 hours w/ NP7-9 (12)
Thurs. 1/10/08 7:30AM	2	7	4	4
Fri. 1/11/08 8:00AM	2	7	7	7
Fri. 1/11/08 12:00PM	10	8	5	11
Wed. 1/16/08 7:00AM	5	6	6	3
Thurs. 1/17/08 11:00PM	8	4	9	2
Tues. 1/22/08 7:30AM	5	4	8	1
Wed. 1/23/08 1:00PM	9	8	6	10

Conclusions from the trial

- The 12 hour parking meters without NP 7-9 were not always filled the first thing in the morning
- Through out the daytime, there are always parking spaces available for 1-hr,3-hr or 12 hr unless special events held in the Hotel
- By talking to some local business employees, some of them still park on Richardson St or Vernon St to avoid meter fees
- The 12-hr meters with NP 7-9 restrictions will have limited utility without enforcement

Richardson Street Lot (proposed)



5. California St/ Colonial Ave

Docket # TC4-08 (176-06)

Requesting discussion and analysis of
potential safety enhancements at the
intersection

California St/ Colonial Ave



California St at Colonial Ave



Colonial Ave



Observations

- Occasionally cars parked on either side of Colonial Street and no cars parked on California St near the intersection
- There are no parking restrictions on Colonial St
- Street width is 24 feet, typical for a local street
- **Three** crashes at the intersection since 2002

Conclusion

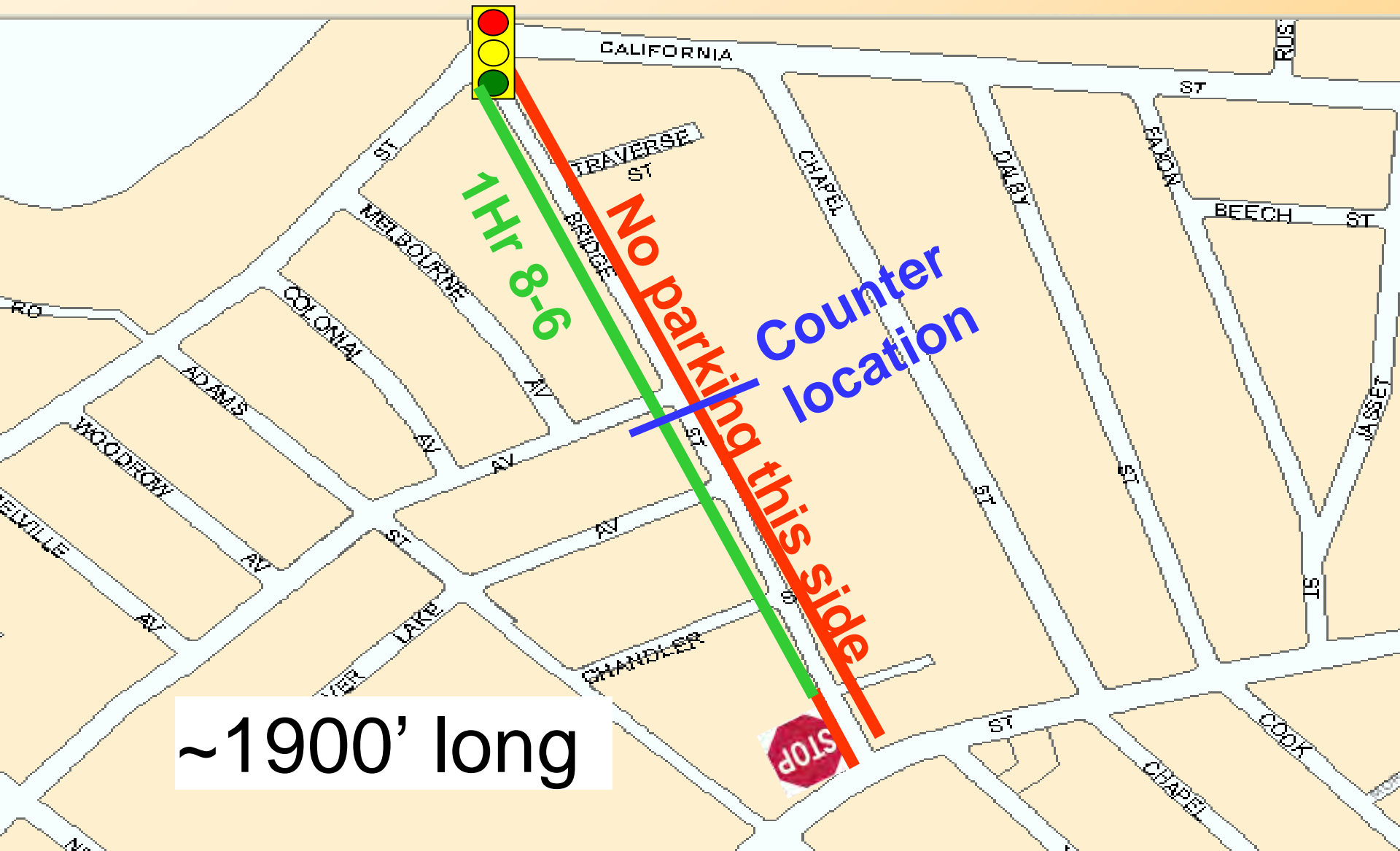
- The chevron sign and dotted line on California street at Colonial St help drivers to maneuver the sharp curve
- No Action Necessary

6. Bridge Street

Docket # TC1-08 (381-04)

Requesting discussion and analysis of
traffic calming measure on Bridge Street

Bridge Street



~1900' long

Bridge St at Linwood Ave (SB)



Bridge St facing California St (NB)



Traffic Counts and Accident history

- **Pedestrian crossings at Bridge St/Linwood Ave = 51**
on Thurs. 1/24/08 7:30-8:30AM
Pedestrian crossings at Bridge St/Linwood Ave= 102
on 8/29/06 4:45-5:45PM
- **Traffic volume count:**
NB = 2,200 veh/day SB= 1,900 veh/day
- **Traffic speed count:**
NB 85 percentile = 32 MPH
SB 85 percentile = 30 MPH
- **Accidents since year 2002**
Total = 25
All but 2 out of 25 occurred at the intersections of
Bridge/Watertown or Bridge/California

Conclusion

- There is an existing crosswalk painted on Bridge St at Linwood Ave
- Field observations showed cars do stop for pedestrians most of the time at the x-walk
- Sightlines are sufficient in both directions
- Recommend pedestrian crossing signs at the crosswalk location